

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 0200

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PO
SUBJECT: AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT DENOUNCES FLA MANIFESTO

REF: PONTA DELGADA 0190(DTG 220025Z MAR 78)

SUMMARY: IN A CAREFULLY WORDED TWO-PART COMMUNIQUE, THE AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT (RGA) HAS DENOUNCED THE AZOREAN LIBERATION FRONT (FLA) MANIFESTO THREAT OF ARMED UPRISING AS WELL AS ITS IMPLICATION THAT THE RGA IS NOT THE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AZOREAN PEOPLE. AT THE SAME TIME, THE RGA SCORED THE REGIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY

FOR LACK OF COMMITMENT TO REGIONAL AUTONOMY. RGA PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL

BELIEVES THAT SUCH SEPARATIST RHETORIC WILL ONLY FUEL GOP PREJUDICES THAT IT IS NOT PRUDENT TO ENTRUST THE REGION WITH MORE SELF-RULE.
END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING ITS REGULAR WEEKLY MEETING MARCH 22, THE RGA ISSUED A STATEMENT "REPUDIATING" THE FLA MANIFESTO MADE PUBLIC MARCH 18. IN
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PARTICULAR, THE RGA SINGLED OUT FOR CENSURE THE MANIFESTO'S THREAT OF ARMED UPRISING WERE THE GOP TO CONTINUE TO SCORN AZOREAN ASPIRATIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE. THE COMMUNIQUE ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT AS THE LEGITIMATE, FREELY ELECTED GOVERNMENT OF THE AZORES, THE RGA DENIED THE

RIGHT OF ANY RIGHT WING GROUP TO PASS ITSELF OFF AS THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE AZOREAN PEOPLE. "THE AZORES ARE A FREE REGION IN A FREE COUNTRY,"

THE STATEMENT CONCLUDED, "AND ITS PROBLEMS MUST BE DEBATED WITHIN THE EXISTING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS."

2. THE SECOND PART OF THE RGA STATEMENT WAS AIMED AGAINST THE REGIONAL

SOCIALIST PARTY WHOSE LEADERS HAD JUST LAUNCHED AN UNUSUALLY ACERBIC ATTACK ON THE RGA FOR "INCOMPETENCE" AND "DELIBERATE SUPPORT OF SEPARATIST FORCES." ACCORDING TO THE RGA COMMUNIQUE, THE PS ATTACKS REVEALED THAT PARTY'S LATE CONVERSION AND FEEBLE COMMITMENT TO THE CONCEPT OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY -- AS WELL AS ITS IMPLICIT LACK OF RESPECT

FOR THE REGION'S DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS THROUGH WHICH THE PSD HAD WON POWER.

3. COMMENT: WHILE RELUCTANT TO CONDEMN FLATLY AND EXPLICITLY THE FLA'S DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE IN THE RGA COMMUNIQUE, RGA PRESIDENT MOTA

AMARAL VIEWS THE MARCH 18 FLA MANIFESTO AS DECIDEDLY HARMFUL TO HIS EFFORTS TO WIN NEW CONCESSIONS FROM LISBON ON AUTONOMY. HE DOES NOT ACCEPT THE ARGUMENT THAT SEPARATIST SABRE RATTLING ENCOURAGES LISBON TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING. ON THE CONTRARY, HE BELIEVES IT SIMPLY CONFIRMS THE SUSPICIONS OF CONTINENTAL MILITARY AND SOCIALIST PARTY LEADERS THAT AZOREANS CANNOT BE TRUSTED, AND THAT ADDITIONAL REGIONAL SELF RULE WILL ONLY INCREASE PRESSURE FOR EVENTUAL INDEPENDENCE.
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4. ACCORDING TO MOTA AMARAL, THE RGA'S SIMULTANEOUS CENSURE OF THE PS

REFLECTS HIS APPREHENSION THAT THE PS MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO BUILD A CASE TO DEMAND PRESIDENTIAL DISSOLUTION OF THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AT SOME FUTURE POINT. WHILE SUCH A FEAR SEEMS UNJUSTIFIED, IT DOES ILLUSTRATE THE HIGH DEGREE OF MISTRUST AND LACK OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE PS AND PSD AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL.
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